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PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY into the wonderful CONEY-WARREN, lately discovered at *Godalmin* near *Guilford* in *Surrey*: Being an Account of the Birth of Seventeen Rabbits born of a Woman at several Times, and who still continues in strong Labour, at the Bagnio in *Leicester*-Fields.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.

Homer.

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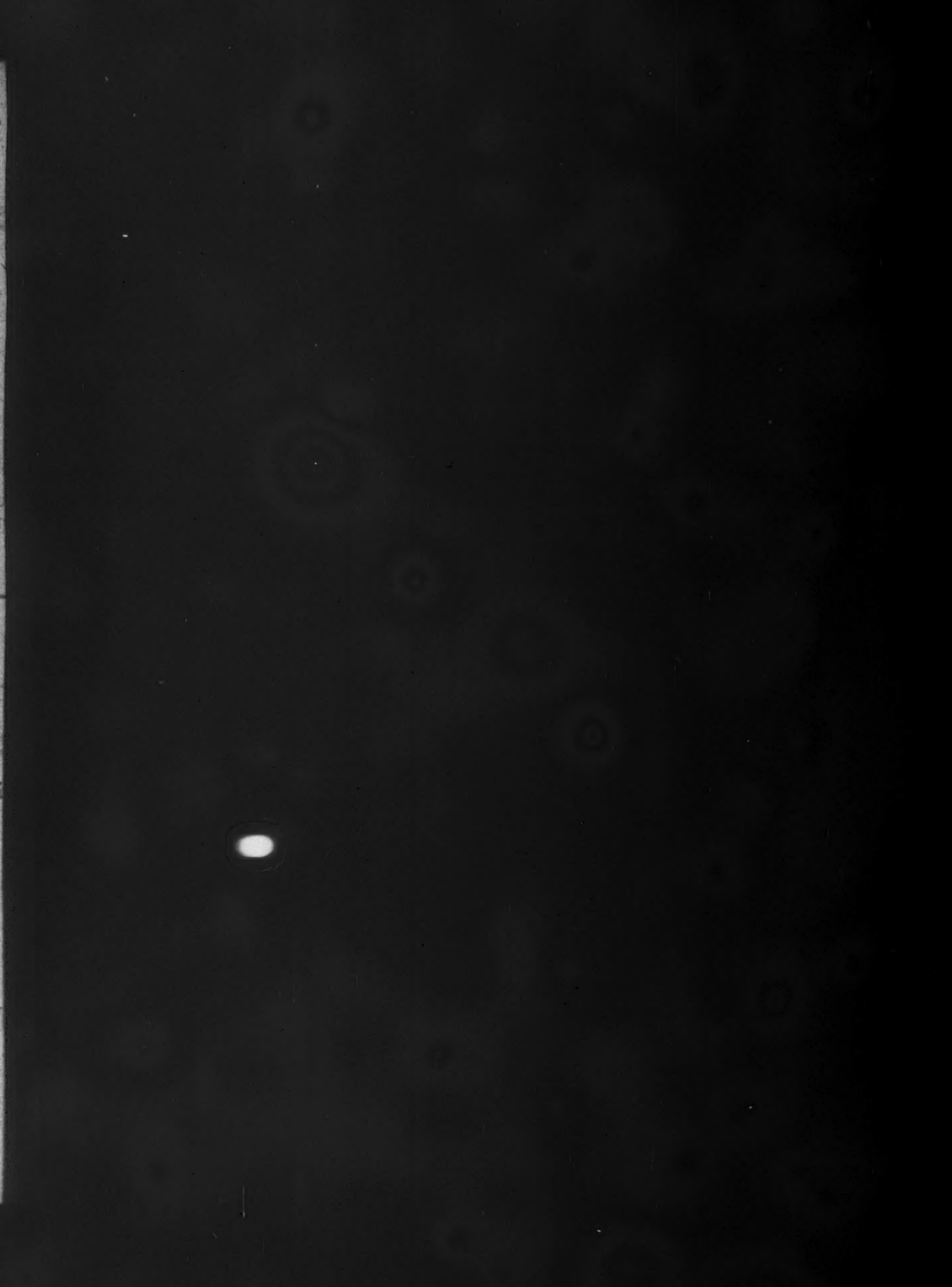

A Philoſophical Enquiry into the wonderful CONEY-WARREN, *lately diſcovered at* Godalmin *near* Guilford *in* Surrey.

IN the firſt Ages of the World, when Mankind was in a State of Innocence, Miracles were uncommon and unneceſſary; but as Wickedneſs encreas'd there was a preſſing Occaſion for them, in order to reſtrain Men from their various Purſuits: Nor can we find that there ever was a full Ceſſation of them, as will more particularly appear by the late ſurpriſing Tale of the good old Woman of *Godalmin*, near *Guilford* in *Surrey*; who, in the beginning of the laſt Month, was deliver'd of a Rabbit, and has ſince that been deliver'd of Sixteen more, by the Care and Help of Mr. *Howard*, an eminent Surgeon and Man-Midwife, of *Guilford*; at ſtated Times of about Thirty Hours diſtance, after having miſcarried in a natural Way. For the Truth of this, I ſhall beg leave to incert Part of a Letter from the above Mr. *Howard*.

Guilford, Novemb. 22. 1726.

'THIS Morning I deliver'd the poor Woman, of *Godalmin*, of the ſeventeenth Rabbit, which I believe may be the laſt. On *Sunday* I had, in his Coach, Mr. *Ahlers*, Surgeon to the King's Houſhold, he came by the King's Order: He took Part of the ſixteenth Rabbit from her, and carried it to *Kenſington*. He was to have ſtay'd till all was over, but being taken Ill, returned the ſame Night. Laſt *Tueſday* I had Mr. *St. Andre*, his Majeſty's Anatomiſt, by the King's Order, who took Part of one from her which weigh'd Twenty two Ounces; and were both ſatisfied in the Truth of the wondrous Delivery; as was Mr. *Molineux*, Secretary to the Prince, who was alſo here: I hear they have made their Report to the King and the Prince.

Now, tho' there are many who disbelieve and endeavour to diſcredit this Story; yet, I hope, the following Reaſons will be enough to ſatisfy thoſe, who delight not to be in the number of Infidels, with which our preſent Ages ſeems to abound. We are aſſur'd, that this Woman being in a Field, ſaw a Rabbit, which ſhe run after but could not catch; the loſs of which, by the Strength of Imagination, may in all probability be the Cauſe; ſince all Authors of Books in Midwifry, tells us of the particular Ways and Means of Working, which the Imagination has on the *Fœtus*; and the many Cells of Generation that are capable of containing many Children at the ſame Time; tho' they ſeem a little defective indeed, and at a loſs to account for the birth of any Child without the Navel-String.

There are ſome that would account for this wonderful Production, by ſaying, The Woman had a criminal Converſation with a Buck-Rabbit, which ran tame about her Houſe; having been ſeen to ſhew ſome acts of Kindneſs to him; for which ſhe had more than once been reprehended, in a modeſt Way, by a Learned Divine.

Others there are, who ſeem rather to believe, the Woman deſigned to cheat the World, by ſuffering a Doe-Rabbit to kindle within her; but I muſt diſſent from this way of accounting for it, in the ſame Manner that Councellor *C* —— did the other Day in *Weſtminſter*-Hall; who being ask'd, If he had read *Gulliver*'s Voyages? Anſwer'd, *He had, but they ſeem'd to be a little Improbable*, ſo that *he could* hardly *believe they were true.*

The learned Mr. *Wh--on* takes her to be the Whore of *Babylon*, with ſeven Heads and ten Horns; which the Divines of our Church have always interpreted to be the Church of *Rome.*

Now there are others who hold that Witchcraft is at the buttom of all this, and that the Woman is certainly bewitched; but this Opinion is eaſily exploded, when we conſider that ſhe did not vomit crooked Pins; which is a Symptom conſtantly attending that Profeſſion; and that there was Graſs found in the Paunch of one of the Rabbets; and this likewiſe, I hope, will ſerve to confute thoſe who held they were not Rabbits; but this I will not ſtrongly inſiſt upon, becauſe it may be anſwer'd, that this is no Proof of it, ſince all Fleſh is Graſs.

Some believe her to be a real Rabbet in the Shape of a Woman, and give Inſtances of the ſame Nature, from the ingenious Mr. *Glanvilles Treatiſe of Witches.*

Nor is the Number of little Ones contained within her, at all ſurpriſing, notwithſtanding the Weight of one of them was 22 Ounces. We all know that the Story of the *Trojan* Horſe was at firſt look'd on as a Fable; in this indeed the Alluſion differs, that live Men were the Production of the lifeleſs Horſe, and dead Rabbits of the live Woman; which, I hope, will be a full Confutation of thoſe Philoſophers, who hold there is no equivocal Generation.

To confirm us in belief of the Truth of this Story, we have the Teſtimony of the ingenious Mr. *St. Andre* himſelf, the King's Anatomiſt, who not only has aſſerted it, but ſeems to put his whole Reputation on it, altho' Mr. *Ahlers*, the King's Surgeon, very heretically diſſents from his Account; but as the one denies what the other affirms, nothing remains but that we judge for our ſelves, and then 'tis not doubted, the former will acquit himſelf to the ſatisfaction of the World, as he did in his late famous Vindication of himſelf in the *Gazette*, againſt the Malice of his Enemies: But this we are ſure, that the Phyſicians at *Tom*'s give Credit to the whole, except One or Two, who are noted for their Infidelity.

Upon the whole, I could wiſh it were proved, that there were no Truth in, or that there never had been any Talk of it; becauſe of the Uneaſineſs it gives me, to ſee the general Conſternation of the whole Fraternity of Poulters, or Rabbit-mongers.

Tho' I cannot help giving my Aſſent to any thing upon Conviction, yet I will not believe upon meer Report, and without farther Proof, the Account which came in ſeveral Merchants in *London* from *Antegoa*, that a Woman was brought to Bed of a Piece of Roaſt Beef; however it be, it has certainly had a very great Effect on the Butchers of *Leaden-Hall* Market, tho' I think they have no reaſon to be concern'd ſince, if ſuch an Accident ſhould unfortunately happen here; it could not prejudice them becauſe of the Act of Parliament made in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, which makes it Felony to ſell, vend, or cauſe to be ſold or vended, the dead Fleſh of any human Creature.

Vide Mericeau *by* Chamberlain.

But the moſt probable Account of this Affair, if we ſet aſide Miracles, is its being done by Practice in this Art, and the Reaſons aſſign'd for it are firſt, that ſhe was known to converſe privately with Rabbits; and ſecondly, that the periodical diſtance of Time, which was 30 Hours between each act of her Labour, ſhews ſhe muſt have been a Practitioner this Way, and we have the moſt reaſon to adhere to this way of accounting for it, ſince we have the concurrent Teſtimonies of the Fathers for our ſatisfaction. I ſhall only at preſent quote Two, St. *Barnard* and St. *Auſtin*; the former of which ſays, 'That by a conſtant application of any Part to any particular Thing, we may 'make that become, at it were, Natural in us which is Unnatural in others,

Artis eſt celare artem.

And the latter, in his *City of God.* p. 494, 499. ſays, 'There are thoſe who can by 'Practice move their Ears; there are, that can ſwallow ye Twenty Shillings whole, 'and contracting but their Guts a little, give you every Thing up as whole as if they 'had put it in a Bag. There are that can break Wind backward ſo Artificially, that 'you would think they ſung.

Heathen Writers are full of extraordinary Conceptions, ſuch as, according to *Ovid*, that the Earth, at the Command of *Neptune*, brought forth an Horſe; and at the Command of *Minerva*, brought forth an Olive Tree.

Nor is this Conception more wonderful than the Mares of *Cappadocia*, (*a*) which conceive with the Wind, but indeed the Foals are ſaid to live but Three Years; and the Mares of *Andalucia* conceive by the South-weſt Wind, as is affirm'd by *Homer*, *Varro*, *Columella*, and *Pliny*.

Ludovicus Vives, in his Annotations on St. *Auſtin*, ſays, *Jupiter*, in the Shape of a Swan, under pretence of avoiding *Venus*, in the Shape of an Eagle, flew into *Leda*'s Lap, who took and kept him; but ſhe being aſleep he got her with Egg, of which came *Caſtor*, *Pollux*, and *Helena*; and that *Helena* was firmly thought to be of the Swan's begetting, becauſe of her long and white Neck; and all our Aſtronomers concur in this, by placing the Swan in the Heavens, as a Monument of this holy Act; and *Caſtor* and *Pollux* are the Signs *Gemini*, which ſhine by turns.

It is eaſy to furniſh our ſelves with innumerable Inſtances of the ſame kind from Hiſtory; but I hope what I have ſaid is ſufficient to inculcate the Belief of it; if not I muſt refer them to the Two famous Phyſicians, who are conſtantly attending her at the Bagnio in *Leiceſter*-Fields, in order to ſatisfy the World of the Truth of this wonderful Birth.

(*a*) *See* Solinus's *Deſcription of* Cappadocia.

F I N I S.

FINIS